

IN THE CLAIMS

Pursuant to 37 CFR §121(c), the claim listing, including the text of the claims, will serve to replace all prior versions of the claims, in the application.

Claims 1 - 37. (Canceled)

38. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:

a plurality of printers operationally coupled to individually respond to instructions received via a network, each of the plurality of printers comprising a controller adapted to determine standby print information indicative of an amount of standby print operations received via the network from all of a plurality of discrete sources, a memory operatively connected to the controller, and an interface adapted to transfer data between the controller and the network; and

a plurality of computers independently communicating by transferring data via the network, each of said computers comprising a controller, an interface adapted to transfer data between the controller and the network, and a memory individually registering network printer information representative of said plurality of printers, each controller of each of the computers being adapted to individually complete registration items of network print information by:

accessing via the network printer information registered in the memory of
in response to reception of a command for printing print-data, to directly transmit an instruction to each of the printers via the interface to command the printers to transmit standby print information via the network, from among the printers operationally coupled to the network determining on a basis of standby print information received from the printers in response to the instruction, a least used printer having a least amount of standby print operations, and

independently of others of said plurality of computers, to initiate printing

20 of print-data by directly transmitting the print-data via the network to the printer
21 determined to be the least used printer.

1 39. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, comprised of each computer
2 registering an item of the network print information in the memory of the computer by:
3 determining whether a command for registering network printer information has
4 been received;
5 detecting the printers connected to the network; and
6 storing the network printer information in the memory.

1 40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 39, further comprised of the controller
2 of the computer assigning priority numbers to the network printer information in order of
3 detection and storing the priority numbers assigned in the memory of the computer.

1 41. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, comprised of each computer
2 determining a least used printer by independently:
3 detecting the priority numbers assigned to a selected number of the printers having
4 the lowest amounts of standby print operations; and
5 from among said plurality of printers, selecting a printer having a preferential
6 priority number as the least used printer.

1 42. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the network printer
2 information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.

1 43. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 39, wherein the network printer

information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 41, wherein the network printer information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.

45. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
a plurality of printers operationally coupled to individually respond to instructions received via a network, each of the plurality of printers comprising a controller adapted to accept standby print information indicative of an amount of standby print operations received via the network from all of a plurality of discrete sources, a memory operatively connected to the controller, and an interface adapted to transfer data between the controller and the network; and
plurality of computers independently communicating by transferring data via the network, and independently generating print data, each of said computers comprising a controller, an interface adapted to transfer data between the controller and the network to one of the printers indicated by a selection from among said plurality of printers by the controller, each memory of each of the computers individually storing a registration of network printer information representative of said plurality of printers, and each controller of each of the computers individually responding to a print command by completing the registration by:

accessing via the network a representation of the amount of standby printer operations stored in the memory of each of the printers in response to receptions of printing print-data received from the computer and from all of the plurality of sources,

from among said plurality of printers, making an determination of a printer storing a least amount of standby print operations received from the computer and from all of sources,

21 in dependence upon the determination, making said selection of a printer,
22 and
23 directly transmitting print-data via the network to the one of the printers
24 selected.

1 46. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 45, comprised of each computer
2 registering an item of the network print information in the memory of the computer by:
3 determining whether a command for registering network printer information has
4 been received;
5 detecting the printers connected to the network; and
6 storing the network printer information in the memory.

1 47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 46, further comprised of the controller
2 of each computer assigning priority numbers to the network printer information in order of
3 detection and storing the priority numbers assigned in the memory of the computer.

1 48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 47, comprised of each computer
2 determining a least used printer by independently:
3 detecting the priority numbers assigned to a selected number of the printers having
4 the lowest amounts of standby print operations; and
5 from among said plurality of printers, selecting a printer having a preferential
6 priority number as the least used printer.

1 49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the network printer
2 information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.

1 50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, wherein the network printer
2 information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.

1 51. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
2 a network coupler; and
3 a computer plug-coupleable to communicate over a network via said network
4 coupler with a plurality of other printers accepting print data received via the network from all
5 of a plurality of discrete sources and a plurality of other computers independently communicating
6 by transferring data and transmitting print data to selected ones of the plurality of printers via the
7 network, and independently generating print data, said computer comprising a controller, an
8 interface adapted to transfer data between the controller and the network to any one of a plurality
9 of printers coupled to the network, and a memory storing a registry of network printer information
10 representative of the plurality of printers, said controller individually responding to a print
11 command by completing the registration by:

12 compiling independently of the other computers, network printer
13 information comprising an identification of each of the plurality of printers by
14 accessing each of the plurality of printers via the network and storing in said
15 memory a representation of an identification read from each of the printers,

16 assigning priority numbers to the network printer information in order of
17 detection and storing the priority numbers assigned in the memory,

18 obtaining independently of the other computers, via the network a
19 representation from each of the printers of the amount of standby printer operations
20 stored in the a memory in response to receptions of print-data separately received
21 via the network from the computer and from the plurality of computers,

22 from among the plurality of printers, making an determination of a printer
23 storing a least amount of standby print operations received via the network from
24 the computer and from the plurality of printers,
25 in dependence upon the priority numbers and the determination, making
26 independently of the other computers, said selection of a printer, and
27 directly transmitting print-data via the network to the one of the printers
28 selected.

1 52. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 51, comprised of said computer
2 registering an item of the network print information in the memory of the computer by:
3 determining whether a command for registering network printer information has
4 been received;
5 detecting the printers connected to the network; and
6 storing the network printer information in the memory.

1 53. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 51, wherein the network printer
2 information comprises an Internet Protocol address of each printer.